

**What Is Claimed Is:**

1. A method for triggering a two-stage belt tensioner, the second stage of the belt tensioner being triggered as a function of a crash severity and a sitting position, the crash severity being determined by at least one signal derived from an acceleration ascertained during a collision and the sitting position determining the evaluation of the at least one signal.
2. The method as recited in Claim 1,  
wherein, if the crash severity indicates a hard crash, the second stage is triggered after a specified time following the triggering of the first stage.
3. The method as recited in Claim 1 or 2,  
wherein, if the crash severity indicates a soft crash, the second stage is triggered as a function of a signal pattern of the at least one signal.
4. The method as recited in one of the preceding claims,  
wherein the second stage is triggered with the second airbag stage.
5. The method as recited in one of the preceding claims,  
wherein a knee airbag is triggered simultaneously with the second belt tensioner stage.
6. The use of a control unit in a method as recited in one of the Claims 1 through 5.
7. The use of an external crash sensor in a method as recited in one of the Claims 1 through 5.